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NEWS RELEASE

Dec. 5, 2008

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UM CHEFS VIE FOR CHANCE TO COMPETE IN REGIONAL COOK-OFF

MISSOULA –

Three chefs from The University of Montana's Dining Services will don their hats and ready their whisks at 11 a.m. Friday, Dec. 19, to compete for the chance to represent UM at a regional culinary challenge in February.

In the event, which is free and open to the public, Chef Tim Hodges, Sous Chef Farrah Smith and Sous Chef Eric Bayley will face off in the University Center Commons. The victor will compete at the ninth annual National Association of College and University Food Services (NACUFS) Continental Region Culinary Competition, to be held Feb. 23 on the campus of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn. The Continental Region winner will advance to the NACUFS National Culinary Competition in Milwaukee in July.

In both the UM cook-off and the competition in Minnesota, each contestant will have five minutes to set up their station; 60 minutes to cook four portions of a nutritionally balanced meal consisting of one original hot entrée featuring rainbow trout, plus side dishes and sauces; five minutes to plate and serve the food; and five minutes to clean and exit their stations.

They will be judged by fellow chefs based on the taste of the meal, the chef's demonstrated cooking skills, knife handling, culinary techniques, organization and sanitation principles in accordance with the guidelines set by the American Culinary Federation.

UM Dining Services' Executive Chef Tom Siegel said that although all the cooks will want to win a gold medal, these competitions were created to help chefs showcase and enhance their culinary talents.

"All the activities you do to prepare for an event – flavor profiles, history, testing, time trials – they all help to make a better competitor and a better chef," Siegel said. "That is the real goal."

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